

CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS

GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

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Report on air quality available on City Council web-site: www.glasgow.gov.uk

Description And Purpose Of Event:

On 22 March 2002 Glasgow City Council hosted a one-day Workshop in the City Chambers, Glasgow. The event, which was organised by Officers from Environmental Protection Services, was intended to act as a forum through which the City Council could commence dialogue with stakeholders on the requirements for an Air Quality Management Area Action Plan. Glasgow City Council had declared an Air Quality Management Area covering a large part of the City centre in December 2001. The event was free to an invited audience. Some 60 people attended, including representatives from relevant organisations (transport, commerce, health, Scottish Executive, SEPA, neighbouring authorities, etc.), individuals, and Council employees and elected members. The Workshop was chaired and facilitated by Tim Burley, an external consultant on Sustainable Development. The morning began with a welcome introduction by Glasgow's Lord Provost, followed by background presentations from representatives of environmental health, roads, and development services of the City Council. Delegates were then broken into discussion groups of around 10 persons, each facilitated by a previously-appointed Council Official. Morning discussion was limited to general topics to attempt to draw out the main themes that people hoped to see within an Action Plan. Following lunch, the same discussion groups then met to discuss a particular theme which had been gleaned from the morning discussion. Groups reported back on the collective thoughts on their theme. During the day the facilitator distributed questionnaires which allowed delegates to provide their individual written comments on options. The day ended with delegates voting on the options or themes on which they were keenest. The facilitator was then able to report back on which options were most favoured.

Follow-Up Reporting:

Part of the facilitator's brief was to produce a detailed analysis of the findings of the event for use by City Council Officers. This would give Officer's some direction on which options they may wish to concentrate when bringing together a written Action Plan. An evaluation questionnaire was circulated on the day by Policy staff of the City Council to assess the overall value of the organisation of the event. All delegates were subsequently provided with a summary of the facilitator's report and the evaluation findings. It is possible

that Glasgow City Council will host another such Workshop as part of a consultation process to determine the final composition of the Action Plan.

Resources Used:

The one day event took considerable organisation in terms of ensuring the audience profile was as desired, the programme structure, preparation of mailing lists, venue, catering, and other practical issues. Costs were met by the City Council and consisted mainly of catering, mailing and the employment of the facilitator.

Advantages/Disadvantages:

The evaluation of the event demonstrated that all delegates found the Workshop to be informative. Many felt that it drew their attention to issues which they had not previously considered. Many wished further workshops or information exercises. The City Council gained an insight into the options which could be considered for inclusion in an Action Plan as well as an opportunity to promote awareness of the issues and the reasons for doing so. Additionally, it was a clear indication of the City Council's commitment to air quality issues and a desire to consult with as many people and organisations as possible. The use of discussion groups and questionnaires meant that all delegates reported they felt they had adequate opportunity to be heard. Many were supportive of the voting system at the end as they gained a 'result' on the day. The use of an external consultant to facilitate proceedings ensured neutrality and delegates did not perceive they were simply being dictated to by the City Council. Disadvantages included costs and time in preparing the event. A considerable amount of effort to sell the event was required to ensure adequate representation of organisations from outside the City Council. Even then the audience profile was not as broad as was hoped with possibly fewer individuals and interest groups there than ideal. Some discussion groups operated better than others. Much depended upon the composition of the group as well as the ability of each group's facilitator. A few individuals suggested improvements to the timing and content of coffee breaks and lunches.

Pitfalls To Be Avoided:

There were no major errors associated with the day. In fact, given the advantages gained by the City Council and the attendees, the event was perceived as being highly successful and of great value in contributing to the drawing up of Glasgow City Council's Air Quality Action Plan. The use of an independent facilitator and discussion groups clearly were beneficial. In terms of preparation, the main difficulty occurred when ScotRail drivers called a train strike for the originally intended day of the Workshop. Given the difficulties that delegates were likely to meet in getting into Glasgow, and that many had a transport-related function, it was decided that the event be postponed and re-scheduled for three weeks later to a day when there were no planned rail strikes. This caused many headaches in terms of preparation and added to costs, e.g. re-mailing. However, the risk that audience numbers and profile would be affected by transport disruption was significant enough to warrant the change of date.